American's Next Great National Park

Early in the 20th Century, a group of visionary citizens worked tirelessly to protect an awe-inspiring portion of the Maine Coast for the benefit of the American people. The result was Acadia National Park, one of our country’s finest natural treasures. Today, we are the beneficiaries of their efforts and foresight.

Maine Woods National Park & Preserve will protect 3.2 million acres of wildland in the heart of the largest undeveloped landscape in the eastern U.S. — preserve and interpret the area’s rich history and traditions, and offer a wide range of outdoor recreational activities close to the most densely populated region of the country.

Public input will help to set the Preserve's boundaries and ensure the continuation of these important recreational pursuits — as with Alaska's Denali and other National Preserves.

Natural Wonders

A Great American Wildland. Maine Woods National Park & Preserve will become one of America's premier wilderness destinations, protecting immense spruce-fir and hardwood forests, and most of New England's remaining old-growth tracts. It will embrace thousands of miles of clear streams, including the headwaters of five of Maine's major rivers — Allagash, Aroostook, Kennebec, Penobscot, and St. John. It will protect most of the land around Moosehead Lake — one of the largest east of the Mississippi — and hundreds of other remote lakes, ponds, and wetlands.

Protected Wildlife Habitats. Habitats will be safeguarded for the full range of native species, such as the black bear, coyote, bobcat, fisher, moose, beaver, bald eagle,Icon, and the greatest population of wild native brook trout in the East.

Endangered Species Recovery. Imperiled plants and animals will have a chance to thrive — including the Atlantic salmon, martian, northern long-eared bat, eagle, spruce grouse, Bicknell's Thrush, wood turtle, Tamah Mutky small whorled pogonia, and what is likely the most abundant Canada lynx population in the lower 48 states.

Wildlife Restoration. The Park & Preserve will be the best place in the eastern U.S. to restore wilderness species, such as the eastern wolf and cougar. Large native predators are vital in maintaining healthy forests and populations of game species.

Climate Change. Huge amounts of carbon will be stored in the trees and soils of the Park & Preserve, helping to moderate the climate. The resiliency of protected native ecosystems will enable them to adapt to climate impacts. Native species will be able to migrate via connections to wildlands in Canada to the north and along the Appalachians to the west and south, as global climate change shifts habitats.

Rich History

Preserving Maine History. For thousands of years, Native Americans hunted, fished, and found spiritual inspiration in the Maine Woods. Forest products companies produced timber and paper. Adventurers such as Henry David Thoreau and Theodore Roosevelt gained a lifelong commitment to conservation. Artists captured the region's natural beauty. Guides and sporting camps offered a unique backcountry experience.

Discovering Maine Traditions. A Park & Preserve will expand our knowledge of, and pride in, Maine Woods history and culture. Visitor centers will offer historic exhibits, maps, and guidebooks. Rangers and guides will offer field trips for those seeking to learn more. You might join a docent or historian at an ancient Native American first quarry, watch an old-time logging demonstration, or retrace Thoreau's historic route by canoe.

Economic Benefits. The proposed Maine Woods National Park & Preserve will help significantly improve and revitalize the struggling, resource-dependent economy of northern Maine. Studies have shown that every dollar invested in our National Parks returns ten dollars in economic value to the public. Nationwide, this creates billions of dollars of local economic activity and supports hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Endless Opportunities. Maine Woods National Park & Preserve will ensure public recreational access to more than three million acres of magnificent wildlands.

Visitors will be greeted with breathtaking vistas, a diversity of wildlife, and a wide range of recreational opportunities. They will be able to hike and backpack on wilderness trails, canoe, kayak and raft rushing rivers, fish native brook trout in clear, cold streams; hunt for elusive North Woods game; swim and boat on peaceful lakes and ponds; bicycle on networks of recovered forest roads; and cross-country ski snowshoe, and snowmobile on hundreds of miles of trails in a winter wonderland.

Consistent Stewardship. A number of Maine Woods attractions already have some level of public or private conservation protection. However, most are scattered and many are surrounded by lands open to damaging development. The Park & Preserve will connect, safeguard, and ensure public enjoyment of these attractions under consistent National Park Service stewardship.

Guaranteed Access. Generations of visitors to the Maine Woods were allowed recreational access by traditional timberland owners. Now, changing ownerships and development are eroding that heritage. A Park & Preserve will guarantee public access to the Maine Woods so that future generations can continue to enjoy Maine's recreational traditions.

Proposed National Park & Preserve
A Vision of What Could Be

Maine looking north from Mount Katahdin

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Maine Woods looking north from Mount Katahdin

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Choosing the Future of the Maine Woods

We have a second chance to realize Thoreau’s The Maine Woods is famous for world-challenging whitewater canoeing and salmon, togue, and brook trout. provide ideal habitat for landlocked Pleasant River and majestic stand Historic Places.

5. Katahdin Iron Works
The 100 Mile Wilderness is one of the most remote and beautiful stretches of this world-renowned hiking trail.

2. Borestone Mountain
This scenic mountain offers pristine ponds and panoramic views of the 100 Mile Wilderness region.

8. Kennebec River
The Maine Woods has the largest longest free-flowing river in the eastern U.S. to hunt in such a remote wilderness.

17. West Branch Penobscot River
This scenic mountain offers an unforgettable wilderness experience.

12. Landscape Art
This prominent peak features compelling views of Katahdin, an extraordinary foliage site, and some of the most ancient geological formations in Maine.

18. Mount Kineo
This remote region of pristine lakes and streams, rugged mountains, ice caves, and lush forests offers an unforgettable wilderness experience.

11. Mount Kineo
This mountain’s dramatic cliff face rises 800 feet above Moosehead Lake. It was a traditional Native American destination and the site of historic grand hotels for more than a century.

34. Abandoned Mining Towns
A 10,000-year-old Native American tootalkning site near Musungatuck Lake is listed on the National Register of Historic Places due to its archaeological significance.

36. Native American Sites
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14. Sporting Camps
For well over a century, the legendary sporting camps of the Maine Woods have long attracted celebrated celebrities, such as Frederic Church, Marsden Hartley, James Fitzgerald, and Carl Spilchhorn.

13. Debsconeag Lakes
This remote region of pristine lakes and streams, rugged mountains, ice caves, and lush forests offers an unforgettable wilderness experience.

10. Snowmobile Trails
Snowmobilers will be able to enjoy the stunning winter landscape in the National Preserve unit via hundreds of miles of Maine’s Interconnected Trail System (ITIS), an important link between Maine Parks gateway communities.

1. Appalachian National Scenic Trail
The 100 Mile Wilderness is one of the most remote and beautiful stretches of this world-renowned hiking trail.

4. Gulf Hagas & the Hermitage
This three-mile canyon on the Pleasant River trail is an example of the many scenic cascades found throughout the proposed Park 

5. Katahdin Iron Works
A part of Maine’s only 10th Century iron works operations, this facility is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

19. Lobster Lake
Recreationists can enjoy outstanding mountain views, sandy beaches, and Maine’s most remote canoeing and backcountry camping on this natural, clear-water lake.

20. Katahdin
Maine’s highest mountain is in Baxter State Park. It is a great day hike for most of the proposed Maine Woods National Park & Preserve, which will surround the state lake.

21. Blueback Trout
Unique to Maine, these rare species is found only in a few Maine Woods waters, including Penobscot Lake.

22. St. John River Headwaters
The St. John, which begins in the proposed Park & Preserve, is the longest free-flowing river in the eastern United States. It provides habitat for rare plants such as the nationally endangered Furbish lousewort and the New England violet, and offers one of the country’s finest wildland canoeing opportunities.

23. International Appalachian Trail
The proposed Park & Preserve will contain the original stretch of this epic hiking trail, which National Geographic calls one of the world’s “Top 10.”

24. Chesuncook Village
One of few surviving examples of a 19th-century logging village, this site on Chesuncook Lake was visited by Thoreau in 1859. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

25. Sugarloaf Mountain
This prominent peak features compelling views of Katahdin, an extraordinary foliage site, and some of the most ancient geological formations in Maine.

26. Big Bog
The Maine Woods has the largest bog population in the lower 48 states. Big Bog is one of many excellent places to see them.

27. Upper Sebois River Gorge
This striking, V-shaped gorge is over 6 miles long and up to 150 feet deep.

29. Hunting Opportunities
These remote waters offer exceptional hunting opportunities.

31. Maine Woods
The Maine Woods, which was the northernmost location reached by Henry David Thoreau on his three extensive trips to the Maine Woods in the 1840-50s.

30. Ice Caves
These tusk caves on pristine Allagash Lake are then cold enough to hold ice all year.

28. Northern Forest Canoe Trail
The wildest sections of this popular canoeing route lie within the proposed Park & Preserve.

29. Hunting Opportunities
There are many fishing opportunities from the early days of logging in the Maine Woods.

32. Old-Growth Forest
The proposed Park & Preserve will encompass one of America’s last remaining old-growth forests, the Adirondacks to the Canadian border, which will be protected within the National Park & Preserve.

27. Northern Forest Canoe Trail
This remote waterway contains vital habitat for a globally rare orchid, the imperiled wood turtle, and the endangered Atlantic salmon.

33. Historic Logging Sites
The remains of a rainfall and the Eagle Lake Tramway, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, are among many fascinating sites from the early days of logging in the Maine Woods.

34. Abandoned Mining Towns
A 10,000-year-old Native American tootalkning site near Musungatuck Lake is listed on the National Register of Historic Places due to its archaeological significance.

35. Aroostook River
This remote river contains vital habitat for a globally rare orchid, the imperiled wood turtle, and the endangered Atlantic salmon.

36. Native American Sites
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Help Make Maine Woods National Park & Preserve a Reality!

There is growing support for the creation of a new Maine Woods National Park & Preserve.

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2. Borestone Mountain
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37. Allagash Wilderness Waterway
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